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Sen. Stamas says 'life in prison without parole' for sexual predators preying on children

LANSING – Sen. Tony Stamas, R-Midland, today introduced legislation which will give judges and law enforcement a powerful new weapon to protect children from sexual predators.

“Criminal sexual conduct in the first degree is a serious charge that deserves a serious punishment,” Stamas said. “This is an issue we need to be perfectly clear on – if you commit a sex crime against a child you will pay for it.”

The legislation will amend and strengthen the Michigan Penal code giving prosecutors and judges the option of sentencing individuals convicted of sex with children to life in prison with no chance of parole.

Senate Bill 709, along with two companion bills, would amend the Michigan Penal Code making it possible for an individual convicted of criminal sexual conduct in the first degree to serve a life sentence without a chance of parole if their victim was under the age of 13. The two companion bills expect to be introduced next week.

Stamas’ proposed law also requires one of the following circumstances be present: infliction of injury, use of a weapon, force or coercion, or the perpetrator held a position of authority.

“Prosecutors are very concerned about the safety of our most vulnerable victims – children,” said David Morse, Past President of the Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan. “We appreciate Senator Stamas’ efforts to protect Michigan's children.”

“The Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence greatly appreciates Senator Stamas’ leadership and commitment to better protect children from sexual abusers,” said Kathy Hagenian, MCADSV director.

The package of legislation will now go to the Senate Committee on Judiciary for consideration.

“Time and again we hear horror stories of convicted pedophiles being released from prison and following the same pattern of abuse that sent them away the first time,” Stamas said. “The recidivism rate is unparalleled. We must make it perfectly clear to these sexual predators who violate children that the first time you do this in Michigan, you will go to prison for life without a chance of parole.”

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Editor’s note: Sen. Stamas’ comments may be downloaded from the Michigan Senate Republican Majority audiowire at:

<http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/audiowire/stamas/index.htm>.